

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-14, 16-19, 21-24, 26-34 are now pending in the application. The allowance of Claims 27 and 32-34 is acknowledged. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection in view of the remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7, 9-11, 14, 16-17, 19, 21-24, 26, 28 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the Bowen '128 patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,589,128). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is Applicant's position that the Bowen '128 patent has been improperly applied as a § 102(e) reference against this application. In particular, the Bowen '128 patent issued based on an application filed on November 2, 2001. In contrast, this pending application was filed on September 19, 2003 as a continuation of U.S. Serial No. 10/007,402 filed December 5, 2001 which, in turn, claims the benefit of provisional application Serial No. 60/ 286,120 filed April 24, 2001. Accordingly, the present application is entitled to claim priority to the April 24, 2001 filing date which clearly predates the filing date of the Bowen '128 patent.

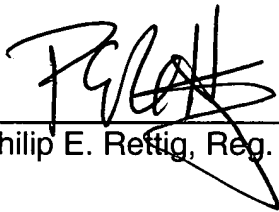
In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the § 102(e) rejection and to indicate allowance of all pending claims over the art of record.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this Response is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1240.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
Philip E. Rettig, Reg. No. 34,000

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

PER/lkb